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A

LETTER

FROM

N. N. to a Protestant Gentleman

OF

IRELAND,

Upon a late Discourse between Them, concerning the present Posture of that Country, and the Part fit for those concerned there, to Act in It.

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I Will make no excuse for adding this *Letter* so soon to our late Discourse upon the same Subject, but that I cannot help it.

These Notions have troubled my Head ever since I saw you, upon your account, and they would be discharged no other way than this. Such as they are, now they are out, they belong to you who raised them, and I must discharge my Conscience too, in sending them to you. When you have them, you may make what use of them you please, I enjoin you only to believe that I design them for no other, than to put you in the right way of keeping that Estate of yours in *Ireland*, which some self-Interest, from the hopes I have to be Entertained there again as kindly as I have been formerly, as well as my constant concern for every Good that belongs to you, inclines me to wish you would not lose.

The danger it is in at this time, I am sure, I need not tell you. I wish the way out of it, were to be seen as plainly; tho' at the same time, I must say, the way out might lye there, in this case, where I cannot wish you would take it. To be plainer, if you should fancy your Interest lay, in this dispute between the two pretending Kings to *Ireland*, on the side of him who has no just pretence to it, I could not wish you would take the unjust side, even to *lose* your Estate. But being convinc'd my self, that yours, and the Interest of every *Protestant* in *Ireland*, lies on the same side, which Honour and Honesty would otherwise oblige them to be of, it may possibly be a piece of Service to make it appear.

I do not then engage in the point of Right and Wrong, between King *James* and King *William*, which of those has the best Title to this Crown, or rather which has a Title, and which has not; that is so well known, that I dare affirm, there is not one of those who has contributed to set up King *William*, but believes in his Conscience he has done wrong to King *James*; nor do I pretend (tho' it be very easie) to shew the Falseness, and so the Weakness, as well as the Baseness of the alleadged pretences for this Blessed Reformation of

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the Lords doing; in which, if there were one single Man, among the many first Contrivers or Promoters of it, who so much as thought of Securing that Religion, which, notwithstanding their pretences, appears, since its Deliverance already, in a worse Condition than it could have been put by King *James*, as long as He could have Liv'd; or who had any thought at all in engaging in that Business, but such as Revenge, Advantage, or Ambition inspired, I will yield that whole Proceeding to be Lawful and Just, which I now take to be the Blackest and Fowlest that ever shew'd its Face in the World, not excepting that against King *Charles* the First. For whatever was laid to his Charge, was laid open, and such as it was, endeavour'd at least to be prov'd to the World; he had, leave and time given him to make his Defence, and was Condemned, if not upon a Hearing, upon an offer of a Tryal, refused by himself. But here is a King driven out of His Own Country (to which escape too in all probability, He is beholding for His Life) by the unexpected, as well as unheard of Treachery of His Own Subjects, chiefly such as He had Raised from Nothing, or had shew'd such kindness to, as would have ty'd any *Jew* or *Turk* to be Faithful to Him, upon Suggestions so Scandalously false, that they could no more prove, than He could act them; and therefore notwithstanding all their Declarations before upon those Heads, notwithstanding all his Provocations to them by Letters to that purpose, (some of which they would not open, because they would not Publish) since He went away, to prove the Imposture of the Prince of *Wales*; the League with *France*, His Brothers *Death*, &c. They dare not go about any such thing, even when the doing it (if it were in their Power) would justify and secure all they have done besides. And when He is driven out of His Country by Treachery, Shams, and Lyes (just as if a Man should set Fire to a part of my House, and then Seize it afterwards, as his, because I run away and left it) He forsooth has *Abdicated* His Kingdom, and it belongs to him who set it on Fire.—— I say, will not enter upon these matters with you, but leave you, when you are disposed to consider them, to such Papers as are Writ already upon that Subject, and to such Writers as are more proper and able than I am to manage them. What we talk'd of last, and what has been running in my mind since, (as I have told you) for your sake, is which way we shall take to secure that Estate of yours in *Ireland*, on which we have been so merry not long ago, to be so on it again.

And in Order to this, if you please, we will examine, first, how many ways there are to be taken at present, and then consider them one by one, which is the most and the best for our purpose.

All the Games to be Play'd, as things stand, by the Protestants of *Ireland*, I think, I may say, are these which follow,

They must either side with King *James*; or King *William*; either Voluntarily continue in *England* Neuter, or return to *Ireland* so; or endeavouring to return, be hinder'd by the Government here.

And the Hazards are, if the contrary side to that which they take should prevail.

If they side with King *James*, and King *William* prevail, meaning the Protestants of *Ireland* (which Country, the Government having all along till now, Continued and Acted, is as much under the Authority of King *James*, as it did in any time during His Reign, and being now actually Governed by Himself, is not pretended to be *Abdicated*) it is most certain, there is nothing which King *William* can make them suffer with any Face of Law, Equity, Conscience,

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ence, or Policy it self; we see it is not so much as thought on even in *England*, that any Man who continued Faithful to King *James*, and endeavoured at least to serve Him as as long as He stay'd here, tho' it were in Arms, should forfeit his Estate for it. On the contrary it is known and own'd that Law, Equity, and Conscience are of the side of the Lawful King, at least, as long as He is Possessed, and without doubt it may be made appear so little Politick, for any Man who gets the Power and the Crown of *England*, to Punish those whom he has found Faithful to it, by his Power only, that it need not be fear'd King *William* will go about it.

I know there is an Objection, by which some endeavour to make the Case of *Ireland* at present, different from that of *England* before the Prince of *Orange* was Proclaim'd, and became, as is said, a King *de facto*; which is, that *Ireland*, by some Interpretation of Law, is subject to the disposal of the Parliament of *England*, as a Dominion of *England*, that the Parliament have made use of their Right by the Law, and given away the Crown of *Ireland*, together with their own, to the Prince of *Orange*, since which time he is to be look'd upon in Possession of *Ireland* as well as *England*, and those who Oppose him there, as Rebels against the King Possess.

For Answer to this Objection, I would ask those who make it, tho' it should be true, that by such a Law, a Parliament of *England*, can in this, and this particular, oblige the People of *Ireland*, whether it can therefore do it in every thing else? And whether the *Protestants* of *Ireland* would have been contented to have pay'd a swinging Tax laid upon their Estates, by the last *English* Parliament. without any Concurrence of theirs? If they would not have been contented with that, because there is no Law for it, then, the aforesaid Law does not Empower an *English* Parliament to dispose of *Ireland* in every thing; and surely, if it cannot give away a little Money, by Charging it upon the Lands of *Ireland*, it cannot give away the Lands themselves, and the Owners too. But suppose that Law had enabled this Parliament to make such a Present, had it therefore made that which is no Parliament able to do it? Is the Prince of *Orange* Empowered by any Law, to Write up a *Convention* in *England*, to give away *Ireland* to himself? As well may he and his *Convention* give it away to the States of *Holland* when they please, and just so, if ever a *Popish* Party should prevail in Parliament again, may they dispose of it to the King of *France*. But if the Prince of *Orange* be not so Empowered, the Objection is Answered; and there being no Law, no Ground of any kind, to make the People of *Ireland*, be they *Protestants* or *Papists*, Rebels against any Power but King *James*'s, as long as He keeps Possession of it; nor any danger that King *William*, in such a Case, should proceed without Law or Ground, there is no fear, that any Man should lose his Estate for being Faithful to, or siding with King *James*, tho' King *William* should prevail.

Let us try then the next Chance, and see how it is likely to fare with those who pretend to set up King *William* in *Ireland*, if King *James* should prevail; and if it be true, as is said before to be, that Law, Equity, and Conscience are of the side of the Lawful King Possess, I am afraid they will appear to be against those, who go about to Dispossess King *James* in *Ireland*, and that consequently not only the Estates, but the Lives of all those who attempt such a thing, being Legally and Justly Forfeited to Him, will have no better Title or Security, than what they must be obliged to His Mercy and Kindness for. And there being this difference between the pretences for Mercy from King *James*, and King *William*, if he should prove Victorious, that the first will

will have the Law on his side in taking such Forfeitures of Lives and Estates as are due to Him, and the last will break all the Laws if he meddles with any, I think there needs no more to make it plain, which is the prudent and safest side. Nay, that there is absolute safety in taking the side of King *James*, though King *William* should prevail, and no other in siding with King *William* if King *James* should prevail, than such as King *James*'s good nature will afford you. In which there can be no farther dispute, unless it be upon this account, that the Game is so sure, or at least with such odds on King *William*'s side, that you may say there is little or no danger that King *James* will ever be in a Condition to take my Estate, and if I do not now make my Court to King *William*, by appearing for him in time, I shall never get any Preferment under him hereafter. If the Game be sure, I confess I have no farther Arguments upon the score of Interest, but must leave you to those already past over of Conscience, and your Inclination for Employment under King *William*; but if it be not certain, let the odds be never so great of his side, an hundred, nay a thousand to one, I do not see why that one should be ventur'd; and do advise you, before you do it, to remember that the *Terra firma* will be play'd against a Castle in the Aire.

The other two parts of staying in *England*, or returning to *Ireland* neuter, being both safe in the Point of Forfeiting, they must be look'd upon according to the different Circumstances with prudential Considerations only: For as I am sure for your part, you ever Laugh'd at that common Bugbear of a Massacree, which has Scar'd away so many Timorous unthinking People, and have more wit than to believe your Life would be in danger, if you liv'd quietly in *Ireland* with satisfaction to the Government; so I think that Fright is enough over with others too, not to need Arguments against it. For in the Name of God to what purpose should such a thing be Attempted, at this time especially, when the whole Country and the Power of it is in their own Hands, when they want nothing so much as People, and when no People can serve their wants but *English*. Is it not the Interest and the sole Business of *Ireland* now, to get the King restor'd to *England*; can any thing else Secure my Lord *Tirconnel*'s own Life, or Estate at least (which cannot run away) but that, can the rest of the *Irish* hope for such Advantages under King *William*, as they have Enjoy'd under King *James*? And will any Man tell me then, that either the King, Lord *Tirconnel*, or *Irish* People, will Discourage such *English* as are with them (though it be no farther, than in not being against them) in this Design. May not any Man of common sense, the most Ignorant in all *Ireland*, plainly see that Massacring the *English*, if they should come among them again, would unite all *England* more than ever against *Ireland*, and King *James*'s return? And if so, can any Man believe that course will be taken by those who are ruin'd, and had almost as good be Massacred themselves, if the King should not return.

But I ask pardon for bringing any thing of Argument to this Subject, which I said needed none: I had forgot Considerations of another kind were to govern the present question. Do you know how to live in *England* in this proposed Neutrality? Do the Rents come out of *Ireland* after you? Or if they do not, does my Lord *Hallifax* Solicite well, and King *William* provide handsome Subsistence for you? Does Lieutenant General *Hamilton*, who was Employed in your Service, give a good account of his Embassy; if these things go according to your mind, and there can be no Law which can oblige you to return into your own Country; undoubtedly *London* may serve turn to spend
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some further time in, and I know not how King *James* can punish you only for liking *England* better than *Ireland*. But if Pence do not accrew neither from *Ireland* nor from your Friends at Court; and Meat and Drink at least may be procur'd upon your own Estates; in my Opinion Eating in the worst of your Gentlemens Houses in *Ireland*, is better than walking Hungry in the Gallery at *Whitehall*.

If any shall endeavour to return (I mean *Protestants*) and be hindred by the Government here, he is so far from being in danger of either side, that he has a very good Plea on both, let which will be uppermost; King *James* cannot but take the good Will for the Deed, in him who endeavours to come to Him; and King *William* I am sure, ought not but provide for those, whom he hinders to provide for themselves.

Having told you sincerely what occurs to me upon these several propos'd ways to be taken in these dangerous times, give me leave before I conclude, to ask you what you think of this farther Case I will put you, relating to the choice you have to make; and then to answer a question you have once or twice put to me, but never gave me time to do it.

For the First, I fancy there may be a danger on one side yet, for which we have not provided; and which, though you may think it enough out of the way, may not be amiss to be at least foreseen. What if siding with King *William*, should be a means to loose your Estate, though King *William* himself should prevail in the end: We have seen so many unexpected, unthought of things come to pass in 4 or 5 Months time already, that it will not be preposterous to suppose any thing.

Suppose then, I say, that you should engage your self so far in the Service of King *William* here, as will put the Law on King *James*'s side in *Ireland* to seize and possess Himself fairly (as we have said before He may in that Case) of your Estate, that He keeps Possession of that Estate with the whole Kingdom some years, against all King *William* can say or do against it, that afterwards King *William* either by an *English* Army, or by the help of some more *Dutch*-Men, beats out King *James*, and settles himself entirely in all these Dominions, with the Conquest of *Ireland*.—— Is not your Estate then, by being found Legally in the Crown, (as Legally as any Estates vested in King *Charles* at his Restauration upon the account of the *Irish* Rebellion) wholly and solely the Right of King *William*? The question I would ask then, is, if he should happen to have more Kindness for *Monsieur Benting* (or some other of his *Dutch* Acquaintance who want Estates, and are to be rewarded for coming hither) than he has for you, what should hinder him, to give your Estate to them as King *Charles* did many Estates so got, to many of your Friends at that time? Can you say your Estate was not fairly in the Crown before, and so not King *Williams* now? No, but you will say perhaps you lost it in Serving him even against your Lawful King. Have you never seen a Service of that nature forgot, or rewarded so, by a King before? But to put it a little handsomer on King *Williams* part, and something more probable on yours, for the loosing side still. It is possible you may dye, before *Ireland* be Recovered yet, though after you have forfeited all you have there to King *James*; in which Case, those who will be left to tell your Story, or Solicite your Cause, may be perhaps some young Children, with such Friends as they shall get, when they have no Estate; and do you think it then altogether impossible that such as they should find some difficulty in being heard and reliev'd at Court? I know not how much easier and better King *Williams* Court may be for Access

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and just dispatch of Business, than those I have known; but according to those, if I were worth any thing, I would think twice, before I ventur'd to put it into their Hands in hopes they would make me a Present of it again.

The question you have ask'd, and I have not fully answered formerly, is this. Say you, in case we should return to that which perhaps is justly enough called our Duty, so as to restore King *James* to his Right and Crown again, how shall we be assured we shall not fall under the same dangers we apprehended our selves before both in our Religion and Properties. He can give no better nor other assurance, than publick and solemn Promises added to such Acts of Parliament as we shall contrive and frame for our own Security. — Have we not had all these already, and has He not broke them all? Does not his pretended *Dispensing Power* at once set aside all Promises, Laws, and every thing but his Will and Pleasure? And though He should now disclaim that to get in again, will it not be very easie when He is in, to lay hold on that common, and indeed many times justifiable come off of Kings, that He was then under a force, and could not bind Himself to His own wrong, or to the diminution of His Prerogative. I confess here is a hard question, and that which makes it harder yet, I am afraid the Charge against us is most of it true. But since I am in, I must get out as well as I can: And as I did not pretend at the beginning to meddle with right or wrong, or to Preach Duty and Conscience in this Letter, I will urge none of those Arguments which otherwise would fall into this place of *Fiat Justitia, ruat Cælum*, &c. but leave those Considerations still to be prest by properer Men than I am, to such as are more likely to mind them than you: And now, as I have prov'd it already to be Infallibly yours, and the Interest of all those of *Ireland* who have Estates there, to endeavour to restore King *James*; if I can add to it that it will not only be so much against His Interest as must end in his absolute Ruine and Destruction, if He shall attempt any such things as you fear, but morally impossible to bring any thing of that kind which He shall attempt to pass: I suppose I shall do your Business as well, and give you as good an Answer, as if I laid Religion and Conscience never so plain before you.

You say, If we should restore King *James* to the Crown, how shall we be assured we shall not fall under the same dangers we apprehended our selves before both in our Religion and Properties.

In the first place (tho' I do not insist in the least upon this) how do you know you were in danger as to those before? It is true indeed by the Consequence, that most People apprehended themselves so; but if it were never design'd by the King to Invade your Religion or Properties, by that Liberty of Conscience which He pretended to Establish; the Establishing such a Liberty purely without doing any thing else, would not have taken those away, but your not suffering any Tryal to be made of what He would have done afterwards, by not suffering it to come to that Liberty it self; it admits of no proof, it can only be conjectured, that when the *Penal Laws* and *Tests* were removed, He would have made use of that Opportunity, to put such People only into Offices and Parliaments themselves, as would contribute to introduce *Poperie*. It may be so, that believing His Own Religion the Right, He would have done what He could to bring others to it (which consists very well with being an Honest Consciencious Man) and it may be too, that if He were perswaded by His Priests or others, that using some moderate Severities to *Protestants*, might weary them out by degrees, and bring them to a Compliance, He might possibly have tried some such way too, (which I confess the

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Protestants have been in the right to prevent, by refusing as they did, to take off the *Penal Laws* and *Tests*) but when those were not taken off, nor likely to be (tho' we had not so shamefully broke through all the Doctrines of our Religion, by running into Rebellion) to lay down a Supposition of our own, which never did, nor ever would have come into Fact, and bring that Supposition into Charge against our King, and Condemn Him upon that Charge, without so much as hearing what He could say to it, I believe you your self will think a little hard; but I am not to insist upon this, it is too late, whatever He designed before, He has paid dear enough for it. The Question now is, if He comes to the Crown again, how shall we secure our Religion and our Laws? By the same way you might have done before, if you had pleased, without any of these Mischiefs either to the King or your selves, which you have brought upon both now; by denying to change your Laws still (if there can be so much weakness as to ask it again) by refusing to contribute to any thing you would not have done, and by resisting only to act against your selves, instead of acting a Treasonable and Rebellious Resistance against Him. And to make it plain, that this can never fail to do the Business, I Appeal to any understanding Man who made any Observation upon that time, with the temper of the People then, and will speak his Mind sincerely, whether he believes that Parliament, after all their Regulations and Contrivances, if it had Sate in *November* last undisturb'd by the Prince of *Orange*. would have done their Business, by taking off the *Penal Laws* and *Tests*. And if that Business was not to have been compass'd then, when all before had gone fair and smooth of their side, when there was no other Prospect but Favour and Employments, and Money for those who should do it, when there was in all appearance, a formidable Army ready to obey the King in every thing, even in the Punishment of those who should not do it; I say, setting aside that it would be direct Madness in the King (who must come in upon Terms and Promises to the contrary, if He come at all) to attempt any such matter any more, I say it is stark Brindess in any body else, not to see that the *Penal Laws* and *Test*, will never be parted with by the People of *England*, and that by consequence and by never failing experience too, it will be impossible for the King to introduce *Popery*, or to Invade them with *Arbitrary Power*.

But I have heard it said, notwithstanding it is true, that the Laws cannot be taken away but by a Parliament, and that such a Parliament will never be chose by the People, and so that there will not be much danger indeed, that the King should get any thing that way now, which He could not before; yet He will come now as a Conqueror, and if He cannot make us unmake our Laws, He will force us to live without Law, and by His Army, Enforce whatever else He has a mind to. By what Army, and by what Force, I pray, will He enforce any thing? Is it a practicable or possible thing do you think, for the King to get upon His Throne again, by the Power of His *Irish* Army, which they say He is about to bring, against the United Strength of *Scotland* and *England*? If it be not possible, He must either not come at all, or it must be with the help of His *Scotch* and *English* Subjects either joyning, or at least not opposing the *Irish*; in which Case it must be own'd He will be brought in by the consent of *Scotland* and *England*, for without them it is allowed His *Irish* Army would signifie little; and then I would fain know what shall hinder these *Scotch* and *English* who could have kept Him out (especially when their own Strength is so well known, and they have got the trick out too) to drive him out again, as I have heard a worthy Member of the House of Com-

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mons has signify'd even to King *William*, whenever any thing shall be attempted which shall not be lik'd.

Oh, but then again says another, what do you think if that *French* Army should come now, which was coming before the Prince of *Orange* Redeem'd us, to cut all our Throats; and they and the *Irish* together should Conquer us all in spight of our Teeth? Would not the King then Govern by an Army, have us all in His Power, and use us like Dogs? I say, my Lord *Sunderland* (who has been fowly bely'd, if he did not know at least all the Mischief the King intended) in his publick Letter sent hither on purpose to make his Peace, by discovering all he did know, tho' laying it upon other People, and by flinging all the Durt he can in the King's Face, is of my mind, that there was no such thing as a *French* Army coming at that time; and says expressely too, that he knew nothing of that *French League*, for which we have so honestly Condemn'd our Master. But nevertheless, suppose such an Army should come from *France* upon this occasion, and endeavour to make a Conquest of us all. I say, first, that it must be a Conquest of us all indeed, for undoubtedly all *Scotland* and *England* would unanimously oppose them to Death, against which it is so little likely, (as things go now in *France* especially) for such an Army to be brought from thence to *England*, as would be able to Master it so united, that it is ridiculous to imagine such a project. Then if we should be so Conquer'd, King *Lewis* would get more by the Victory than King *James*, and it would do King *James* so little Service to have His Kingdom so Recover'd, that for His Own sake He will never try that way, if there be any other left.

If there be no other way left, what Impartial Man can blame Him (who is out of All without it) for making use of that, tho' it do bring an uneasy Partner with it: And if the People of *England*, by turning out their own King, shall bring themselves to be Conquered by the King of *France*, they must blame themselves.

Upon the whole matter (unless it be this of a *French* Army Conquering *England*) which (if it be not so improbable as I have said it is) will deserve the more Consideration, whether it should not be prevented in time, by consenting to receive King *James*, it is plain there is no way for King *James* to Return, but by the Consent of His People, and that, when He does come so, there is no danger that his People should Suffer by Him, either in their Religion, their Laws, their Properties, or in any, tho' never so trivial thing, unless they consent to that too.

Whether the People of *England* (when they have it in their Power) may be trusted with the care of themselves in such matters, I leave it to you to Judge, as I must do, all the rest I have said here.

Do not take it ill that I have offered you my Thoughts, and take what Course you please; I will nevertheless continue

Your Humble Servant.

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